

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 19 Feb 58	2. LOCATION Topeka, Kansas	12. CONCLUSIONS	
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local _____ GMT 19/2200Z	4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Radar <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Air-Intercept Radar	<input type="checkbox"/> Was Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Balloon <input type="checkbox"/> Was Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> Was Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Probably Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly Astronomical <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Data for Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
5. PHOTOS <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	6. SOURCE Military		
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 1-2 secs	8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS one	9. COURSE downward	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING Comet-like falling obj, orange flame, size of dime. Appeared to have tail four times diameter of obj. Appeared to disintegrate.		11. COMMENTS Probably accidental release of some obj fm a/c. Possible daylight meteor, possible burst of WK balloon. Obj evaluated as no threat. Case considered insufficient data.	

ATIC FORM 329 (REV 26 SEP 52)

WOC04V SJC102 YMB084 WYC064 WDA06SFBA042

RJEDDN RJEDKF RJEDSQ RJEHQ

EL

SACUS

RJEDDN RJEDKF RJEDSQ RJEHQ

DE RJWFFB 2

R 200145Z

9 III

FM COMRADIV21

TO RJEDDN/COMDR ADG ENT

INFO RJEDKF/COMDR 20 AIRDIV

ZEN/CINCSAC

RJEDSQ/COMDR ATIC

RJEPHQ/DIRECTOR OF INTELEIGENCE MEDUSA

BT

UNCLAS/SDDOI 0976. UFOR. 1. A. COMET-LIKE FALLING OBJECT.

B. DIME. C. ORANGE FLAME. D. ONE. F. N/A. G. APPEARED TO
HAVE TAIL FOUR TIMES DIAMETER OF OBJECT. H. NONE. I. NONE. 2A.
FLASH OF ITS LIGHT. B. 30 DEGREES ABOVE HORIZON, DUE NORTH. C.

D. DEGREES ABOVE HORIZON, DUE NORTH, D. STRAIGHT DOWN VERY HIGH }
SPEED. E. APPEARED TO DISINTEGRATE. F. ONE TO TWO SECONDS.

G. GROUND VISUAL. B. NONE. C. N/A. D. 19 FEB 1958, 2200Z.

H. DAYLIGHT. ^{note} 5. 3858 NORTH 9540 WEST BASE OPERATIONS FORBES AIR
FORCE BASE KANSAS. SA. [REDACTED] TOPEKA, KANSAS.

[REDACTED] MAJOR, USAF, 90TH STRAT RECON WING (CD),

PAGE TWO RJWFFB 2

FORBES AIR FORCE BASE, KANSAS. SQUADRON OPERATIONS OFFICER, HIGHLY RELIABLE. 7A. 10,000 BROKEN, VISIBILITY: GOOD. B. SURFACE 050/54; GM 310/15; 12M 330/30; 16M 320/45; 20M 330/60; 30M 340/80; 50M 330/55. C. ESTIMATED 8,000 BROKEN, HIGHER BROKEN, 15 MILES VISIBILITY. E. SIX TENTHS TO EIGHT-TENTHS. F. NONE. G AND H: NONE.

10. UNKNOWN. 11. CHIEF, INTELLIGENCE DIVISON, 95TH STRAT RECON WING.

A SIMULTANEOUS REPORT SIGHTING OF AN OBJECT FALLING FROM AN AIRCRAFT DIRECTLY OVER THE CITY OF TOPEKA KANSAS WAS REPORTED TO THE CONTROL TOWER OF PHILLIP BILLARD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, TOPEKA, KANSAS BY A CIVILIAN AS NOTED IN 6(A). CIVILIAN OBSERVER STATED OBJECT WAS OBSERVED FOR 15 SECONDS WHILE DRIVING CAR IN A NORTHERLY DIRECTION AND THAT OBJECT APPEARED TO BE FALLING STRAIGHT DOWN.

MAJOR [REDACTED] POINT OF OBSERVATION WAS 8 MILES SOUTH OF CIVILIAN POINT OF OBSERVATION. NO POSSIBLE CAUSE OF THIS SIGHTING HAS BEEN CONFIRMED. MAJOR [REDACTED] HAS OFFERED THE POSSIBILITY OF A TIPTANK OR DOOR LOST FROM A HIGH ALTITUDE AIRCRAFT.

A CHECK WITH ARTC, KANSAS CITY, MO. REPORTS NO AIRCRAFT IN AREA ON THEIR BOARD AT THE TIME. UNABLE TO CHECK ALL LOCAL MILITARY FLIGHTS.

12. NONE. — *Accident report?*

BT

20/2224Z FEB RJWFFB *Sgt Johnson
See Dr. Oliver
Left to see
Daylight before
P.M.*

G.

Note:
They almost fully
clouded to
the sun produce
some shadow like

*More likely
accidental
release*

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
ASTROPHYSICAL OBSERVATORY

SECTION OF UPPER ATMOSPHERE STUDIES
IGY OPTICAL SATELLITE TRACKING PROGRAM
60 GARDEN STREET
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASSACHUSETTS

May 23, 1958

Captain George T. Gregory
Hqtrs, Air Technical Intelligence Center
Box 9307
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

Dear Captain:

I now have had a chance to look through all the reports you sent, and the one concerning the "satellite-type sighting" from Denver interests me very much and I am giving it the full treatment. It is clear that this could not have been any of the American satellites, not only because of the excessive brightness, but because no American satellite at present could be seen approaching from the northwest at the latitude of Denver. On April 30th there were no known Russian Sputnik's up, but even had there been it is almost inconceivable that objects that bright would escape detection by our Moonwatch teams. This is a corker; so much so, that I wish I had the time and the opportunity to talk with these two officers. It could be that in casual conversation some clue might be obtained which is not apparent in their report.

I had an experience the other night which may bear on this. I had been instructing my young daughter in figuring sidereal time, and we had gone out on the lawn to check our calculations when there came along a sputnik-like object---correct brightness, correct speed, correct color, and I almost stood agast. There was no sound. A few minutes later another such object came through in another direction, and then a few minutes still another. On the third one I was able to detect over ambient noises the sound of jet motors. Lights were not blinking. If the other object had not gone through I might honestly be puzzled to this day as to whether I had seen an unknown satellite. I didn't know that jets ever carried such lights.

It is almost inconceivable two such experienced officers could have made the mistake I had first made, but strange things do happen. In the meantime, I am having this observation checked against all other "unknown sputnik's" that our teams from time to time reported.

As to the other cases, which I am returning (I will return the Denver case very soon), we certainly seem to have a fine bunch of meteor observations--five of them. Two others remain: one, the object that was seen the same time on two nights just before sunrise

(period of morning twilight had already begun). Vega was, as you say, near the point of sighting but it seems to me that it was somewhat higher than 60° . There was of course a very fine spectacular object in the sky at that time but, unfortunately, in the southeastern sky. The planet Venus was at its brightest in the pre-sunrise sky, and I know from past experience how easily it can be mistaken for an unknown object. My only reaction is to question the stated position and to consider the possibility that it was Venus.

The case of the "daylight meteor" is greatly ambiguous. While a daylight fireball cannot be ruled out, I would myself favor the accidental release of some object from an aircraft. However, much hinges on the statement "orange flame". If it really was flaming then it looks as though we must accredit this to a daylight meteor. If the light was simply a bright reflection of sunlight, then we have the other possibility. In either case, there is nothing hostile, and I say to this "insufficient information to be able to distinguish between daylight meteor or object falling from aircraft". I don't think it is worthwhile to pursue this one, although I think if I could talk to the chap a better analysis might be made. It just occurs to me that perhaps the object might have been a burst weather or cosmic ray balloon, with the reflection from the trailing material accounting for the "tail four times the diameter of object". In fact, I think this is a distinct possibility since it occurred in the neighborhood of the municipal airport from which, I suppose, balloons are launched. The time of observation was 4:00 p.m., their time which, I believe, is about the time of such launchings. So, three possibilities: daylight meteor---part of aircraft---bursted balloon. All harmless but, I now tend to prefer the latter.

I am looking forward to visiting you in your new quarters---I hope in early June.

Cheers,

J. Allen Hynek

JAH:lc

Encls.